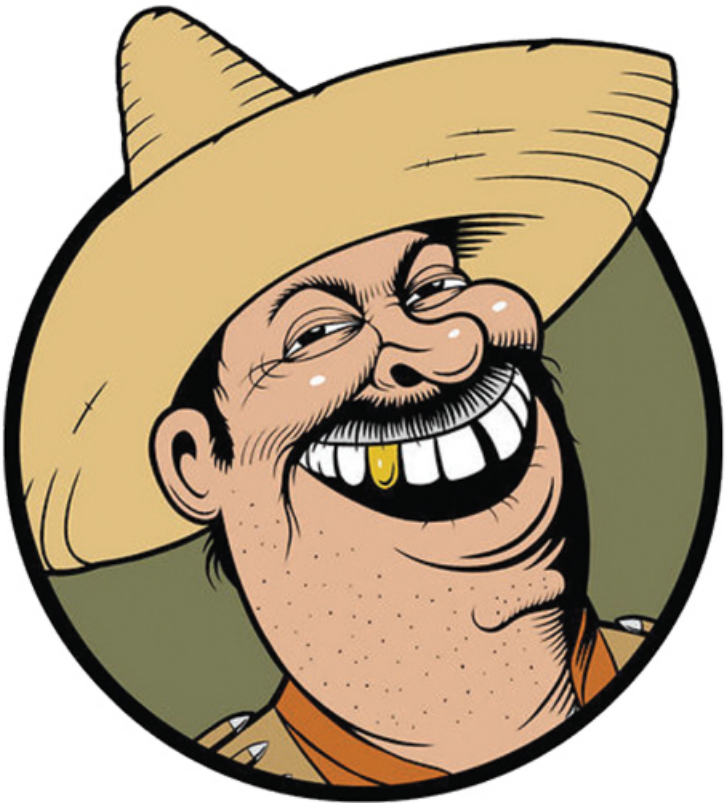
Written by By Gustavo Arellano
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Dear Mexican: I'm a 23-year-old Latina attending a Texas university. I'm taking a class that is centered around Latino culture and history. I'm a first generation Tex-Mex kid, and lately all of the documentaries and other course work have been making me "feel some type of way" angry/sad/and overall confused, for lack of better phrasing. I don't know how to handle these feelings, and it is making me be more introspective about the Latino/Mexican part of my identity—as if I didn't already have enough issues there. I don't want to overthink it, and I don't want to always wonder how people perceive me because of my background. But I don't know how to feel about what I am learning and if it's okay what I am feeling. Did you ever go through something like this identity crisis type thing? And any advice on how to feel/handle it?

Down in Denton

Dear Mujer: Was I ever confused about my ethnic identity? Absolutely—tell your Chicano Studies professor to assign *Orange County: A Personal History* to *ustedes,* and you'll get the carne asada of the matter. But your situation deserves a more insightful perspective than mine,

so I turn the *column* over to one of my bosses: Alexandro José Gradilla, chair of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at Cal State Fullerton, where I'm an adjunct-at-large.

"Dear Iztaccíhuat, you are experiencing 'Chicano Studies Rage 101,'" Gradilla writes. "Here is a synopsis of why you are feeling the way you do. After over decade in a K-12 school system that never really broached or addressed issues of institutional racism, most students of color coming out of high school would probably answer 'no' if asked 'Have you ever experienced racism?' Here is the double problem. Most students have not learned anything about 'their' group. More importantly, they have not been taught about institutional racism. So taking a college level history or sociology course—or, as you experienced—an ethnic studies class where systemic or structural racism analyses is par for the course. Then you get what happened to you. A sudden flood of cold, hard facts connected with theories of racism—then BAM! You are forever aware of the nature of social inequality in the United States.

"You 'see' how unfair ad obscene racism is. Racism—and not individual prejudice or bigotry but an embedded system of exclusion and denigration—is a profoundly ridiculous and irrational system. Whether you are learning about the *Mendez, et al. vs Westminster* case or the Felix Longoria affair and all within the short confines of a quarter or semester—even the most complacent coconuts are overwhelmed and bothered! The rage is famously captured by the quintessential Chicano movement poem "I am/Yo soy Joaquin" written by Rodolfo "Corky Gonzales."

So my little brown Aztec volcano: your pending explosion within the classroom is nothing new. Just remember: use your new knowledge to heal, not to hate…"

Awesome job, *profe jefe*! Just one more thing I'll add: while it's okay to feel angry, never let the other side get the better of your anger, as I'll show with the next question…

Does your cesspool homeland of Mexico allow illegals to break the law and sneak in??? Hell no—but I guess it's okay for the USA to allow it for you and your deadbeat wetback cousins. Go fuck yourself, and I am sure that this is not the first time you've heard that from a fed-up USA taxpayer who is sick of you parasite moochers from down South. Clean up your land if you want a good life. Don't ride our coattails, you damn losers.

Klein in Van Nuys

Dear Gabacho: Parasitic moochers riding coattails? *Olla*: meet *hervidor*. Or, in English: can't wait for your beautiful brown grandchildren to take Chicano Studies 101!